1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

hood was a day when he and an elder brother set off for the fields and almost ran into a party of raiders. The scolding which they received was not forgotten.

The practice of leaving the *ocisembe* in the village by day makes his elder sibling responsible for much of his education. This is the beginning of a close bond which lasts through life. She herself may not be more than six or seven years old and consequently cannot be expected to 'educate' her little charge very thoroughly. She interests herself in his walking and talking and he will imitate her in many things, but the rest of 'conscious education' must be attended to by the parents.

Cleanliness. Instruction in cleanliness begins at this age, but I fear that it is lacking either in intensity or in persistence for its effect seems to be rather long-delayed. Small babies are not washed very often but their bodies and heads are anointed with palm-oil against infestation with the various parasites of the tropics. Anointing the body continues to be a part of the toilet of the Ocimbundu through life. When palm-oil is scarce, such afflictions as common itch are more prevalent. Nowadays, in the well-appointed household, the *ocisembe* has his hands and face washed before breakfast. If such a connexion between washing and eating were always and everywhere maintained, habits of personal cleanliness might be more widespread. Brushing the teeth may be begun in imitation of mother. Sphincter training is begun very early, for the mother feels every muscular movement made or attempted by the baby on her back. Hence she is apt to know when it is necessary to take him down for defecation. If and when this procedure is followed through with regularity and persistence early sphincter control may be established, but too often this is not the case. Establishment of bladder control is apt to come even more uncertainly as a favourite proverb concerning the weather indicates:

Ihu lia soka ndetako lioñaña.
The sky is like the bottom of a baby.

The Ovimbundu do not associate these bodily functions with shame to the extent which is the case in our culture, but euphemisms are used in place of the exact terminology.[1] If an

[1] There are prohibitions regarding these functions during visits to relatives-in-law with whom one has respect-relations, also to the bride during the wedding ceremonies. (See Folk-tales nos. 12 and 13 of the short collection in the *Journal*

1: Childl 1-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

863 *ocisemba* defecates on the bed he will be slapped that he may not repeat, but less flagrant breaches do not seem to call for punishment.

868 *Language.* The progress of toddlers in language mastery is rapid. Some mispronunciations are allowed. Some children pronounce correctly more rapidly than do others. Correct use of the language including mastery of the complicated grammatical structure, however, is mastered much earlier than is the case with English-speaking children. One could almost say as does Father Van Wing of the Kongo child: 'À quatre ans il parle mieux sa belle langue Kikongo, qu'un Européen de douze ans ne parle la sienne.'[1] The baby's earliest babblings, as well as his later evident imitations of his elders, are all recognized as his attempts at self-expression which as a matter of course will straighten themselves out in due time.[2] Parents speak to their children in a tone distinctly different from that employed in ordinary adult conversation, but they rarely if ever use the baby's own mispronunciations or 'baby-talk' as do Europeans and Americans. This, and the fact that young children have much more practice than have our children, owing to the constant companionship of their elders, seems to be the secret of their rapid progress. Whether the nature of the language itself has any effect would be an interesting subject for investigation.

867 *Manners* are also taken on quickly during this time. Toddlers are not expected to practise any very wide range of the social niceties, but what they do, they do correctly. They give and receive with both hands. They both give and answer greetings with proper terms of respect. An outsider, however, can rarely observe such behaviour naturally in the young child. He has been so

606 514 *of the American Folk-Lore Society*, vol. xxxv, pp. 129 ff.) The terms used are as follows:

Exact terms	*Euphemisms*
To urinate, *oku sūsā*	*oku talamēlāko*, lit. 'to stand to something'.
(urine, *ovāsū*)	*oku litapela*, lit. 'to water oneself' (said of a child when it wets itself or its bed).
To defecate, *oku nia*	*oku enda kusenge*, lit. 'to go to the bush'.
(faeces, *eniña*)	*oku enda kofeka*, lit. 'to go to the country'.

The verb *oku nia* is used as a strong or profane expletive or interjectory phrase, especially in the first person with *etaili* (to-day), as *Etaili nda nia*. The verb is customarily left off.

Études Bakongo, p. 262.

Cf. the proverb: *Wa senza, wa imba: wa tumbuka, wa popia*, 'He mispronounces, he sings: he babbles, he speaks.'

862 "The practice of leaving the *ocisemba* in the village by day makes his elder sibling[1] responsible for much of his education....She herself may not be more than six or seven years old and consequently cannot be expected to 'educate' her charge very thoroughly. She interests herself in his walking and talking and he will initate her in many things."[2]

863 General instruction in cleanliness begins at this age, although sphincter control may have begun much earlier, since the mother feels every movement made by the baby on her back.

145 After weaning the physical development of the child proceeds more slowly than that of European peoples, and Childs believes that this may be due to deficiencies in diet.[3]

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

857 From the time a child is able to walk until he is about nine years old he continues seeing the same people as before, but he becomes less de-
861 pendent upon the elder sister or cousin who helped him, and begins his life-long association with his age-mates. The sex-division of society starts for him at this stage: from about eight years boys begin to eat in the *onjango* with their fathers, girls continuing in the kitchen with their mothers. After about eight years the father becomes largely responsible for the education of boys, the mother for that of girls. During this period the child's education may be summarised under three heads:

869 (a) *Psychological*, chiefly fear of real or imaginary dangers. This is imparted by mother, elder siblings, and perhaps by a grandmother; there is a tendency for the teaching of fear to be done by women.[4]

867 (b) *Social*, chiefly usages of etiquette and acquaintance with the kinship structure and its requirements. A child of about eight is supposed to know his social status and all the etiquette that pertains to it. In the *onjango* the hierarchy of age is observed, honoured guests and old men being served first, and so on all down the line. With the decline of the *onjango*, there has been a great decline in the teaching of etiquette and social usage, and this naturally affects boys rather than girls.

864 Little direct sex teaching is attempted, and adults are reticent in speaking of sexual matters in the presence of children. But since children live with their parents in one-roomed houses, it is inevitable that children should sometimes observe intercourse.

868 (c) *Training in skills*: Children are taught few definite skills before the age of eight or nine, but many of their games are in imitation of adult activities.

164 From the age of six or seven years children are usually sent to spend
857 one or two years with the mother's brother. They may also be sent to the father's sister or brother for a period, and, in the case of girls, to the mother's mother. Formerly prominent families sent their children for a

(1) Either a brother or sister may act as nurse.
(2) Childs, op.cit., p.95. (3) Ibid., p.97.
(4) Childs actually writes " 'the side of the basket' " (p.100), but seems to be referring simply to female relatives.